



## Giants Tee Off for Charity

Coughlin enjoys first golf outing as Giants head coach.

By Michael Eisen, Giants.com

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**East Rutherford, N.J.** - One of the biggest days each year on the Giants' calendar is the team's annual benefit golf tournament to raise money for the Giants Foundation. This year's event, which was held Tuesday at the Canoe Brook Country Club in Summit, N.J., brought together an impressive assortment of current and former Giants players and coaches.

But the highlight of the day for the 300 or so golfers in attendance was a dinner address by Tom Coughlin, who appeared at the tournament for the first time as the Giants head coach.

"Our offseason has been a busy one," Coughlin told the enthusiastic crowd of Giants fans. "We've made a lot of changes. We have 20 new veterans from the (free agent) category and the waiver wire, seven draft choices and we signed 16 college free agents. We have a large group of young men on the field working and competing right now. We like the attitude that the players have expressed. We are learning the way in which I like to practice, the up-tempo practice, everybody knowing exactly what their roles is and where they are and the performance level that I expect. So we're making good progress along those lines and we're definitely excited about this season."

So are the players, many of whom worked out at Giants Stadium in the morning, then made the 45-minute drive to the golf course. The current players in attendance included Amani Toomer, Will Allen, Eli Manning, David Diehl, Jeff Feagles and Nick Greisen. General manager Ernie Accorsi and director of player personnel Jerry Reese played in the tournament, as did former Giants Harry Carson, Ottis Anderson, Dick Lynch, Bill Ard and Brad Daluiso (and many others).

"One of the things that really excited me was seeing so many former Giants players here and supporting this new regime," Coughlin said. "It gave me a great sense of pride to see a bunch of guys I had coached and been associated with a few years back and see the way they continue to support the Giants."

The tournament was played in a scramble format.

Once inside, the participants had an opportunity to bid on items in both a silent auction and a live auction. The silent action items included jerseys, helmets and large photos signed by Tiki Barber, Jeremy Shockey, Ike Hilliard, Toomer and Manning, baseballs signed by several baseball stars and a guitar autographed by Jon Bon Jovi. Among the live auction items were trips to Giants road games, the chance to be a Giants ball boy for a game and a trip for two to Super Bowl XXXIX in Jacksonville.

The tournament was expected to raise in excess of \$100,000 for the Giants Foundation, which the



**Rookie QB Eli Manning poses for a photo with one of the Giants all-time greatest players, Harry Carson, during the team's annual golf outing Tuesday.**

organization created in 1992 to respond to the high volume of monetary donation requests that were received from the community. Since then, the Foundation has established itself as an organization that concentrates on assisting small non-profit groups that are in desperate need of funding to maintain their existence. The Giants Foundation has assisted groups and non-profit organizations with their fundraising efforts. The Foundation also serves as a conduit in raising public awareness of issues that concern our society.

When Coughlin first stepped to the podium during the buffet dinner, he joked that when he received the memo about the tournament, it said nothing about having the coach speak to those in attendance. Then, after introducing his assistant coaches, he treated the fans to his perspective on the current state of the team.

Coughlin began by explaining he had switched the offseason conditioning program to one that uses free weights instead of the machines that were in place under the previous coaching staff.

"The players have really responded extremely well to this program," Coughlin said. "So many positive thoughts have come back to us in terms of how our training is going, how we're doing, not only in our strength program, but in our running program. We're excited about that.

"This is the beginning of a very, very important time for us as a football team. Because of the number of injuries the team had last season, we put everything off until later in the spring. We will practice twice this week, then hold mini-camps each of the next two weeks. This will be an important push that we make to put our football team together and put ourselves in the right frame of mind, and the right people in the right positions, the right competition going with competition. I think things will reach a performance level that will be acceptable to us at this time of year. But it will set the tone for training camp. I think the players realize how important these upcoming three weeks are. I hope they're looking forward to it as much as I know our staff is looking forward to it."

The players will report to training camp at the University at Albany on July 29. Practice begins the following day, Friday, July 30. The regular season begins on Sept 12 at Philadelphia. It's safe to say Coughlin will be excited that afternoon.

"To be in the NFC East, it's going to be great again," Coughlin said. "With Joe Gibbs back in Washington and (Bill) Parcells in Dallas and Andy Reid in Philadelphia, it's going to once again be under the microscope and be the finest division in the National Football League."

## **Notes**

- *The low gross group was headed by Feagles and included Mike Ward, Mike Lucas, Brad Purcell and Tom McNamarra. The low net group, from Konica/Minolta, included Paul Gordon, Shel Gordon, Ken Lord and Bob Striano.*
- *Bob Blumenfeld, won a Toyota Solara convertible when he knocked in a hole-in-one on the 184-yard seventh hole on the North Course.*
- *New Jersey Attorney General Peter C. Harvey's conservative business suit was conspicuous among all of the colorful golf clothing. But he was not at Canoe Brook to play, but to champion the Giants' support of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which is designed to increase voter registration throughout the country.*

*"I think it's terrific the Giants are involved," Harvey said. "It shows their continuing civic commitment, which is important. They aren't just athletes who run up and down the field, but they are conscientious professionals who are connected to the New Jersey community.*

*And it's a tribute the Giants leadership, which has always set a standard of civic commitment that other teams should emulate."*

*The Giants' involvement in supporting HAVA is the result of efforts made by Director of Community Relations Allison Stangeby, who heard about the act and believed NFL participation would help increase voter registration. After conversations with, among others, Michael Strahan and actor Billy Baldwin, Stangeby presented her idea to the NFL. There are now 20 teams on board, all of which will shoot a public service announcement in support of HAVA. The spots will likely be combined to make a national spot.*

*The Giants will hold a voter registration day on Sept. 26, when they host the Cleveland Browns. They hope to register as many voters as possible for the Nov. 2 election.*

*Harvey said fewer than 50 percent of eligible voters typically cast a ballot in an election. With backing from the Giants and the NFL, perhaps HAVA can help raise that figure.*

*"We need celebrities," Harvey said. "There is nothing better to help encourage people to engage in productive activity than the use of athletes. Particularly young men. Women vote quite regularly and generally women have been the more productive members of the electorate.*

*"The only way to (increase the number of people who vote) is consistent communication. We have to advertise voting and other civic responsibility in the same way that we advertise leisure activities and the same way we advertise beer. We need to get people excited about voting and explain to people why their vote matters. And that's where the importance of having celebrities like the Giants comes into play. That's the real value. Somebody will take notice of their favorite sports hero announcing that he or she votes and encouraging them to join the team by voting."*

- *The Giants have signed offensive lineman Greg Walker and released offensive lineman Jeff Roehl.*

*Walker, 6-5 and 341 pounds, started 26 consecutive games at Clemson, playing right tackle in 2003 and right guard as a junior in 2002 and started 26 consecutive games. Last year, he was voted second-team All-ACC by the Associated Press. He was a reserve in each of his first two seasons after redshirting in 1999. Walker was the only offensive player from Clemson's 2003 senior class to play in four bowl games.*

*Walker was not drafted this year and signed as a free agent with the Detroit Lions on April 30. The Lions released him on May 6.*

*Walker was rated the No. 2 offensive line prospect in South Carolina after his senior season at Sumter High School. He is very active in community services and was nominated for the American Football Coaches Association's Good Works team for his volunteer work. Walker was born on Oct. 1, 1981.*

*Roehl was signed as a rookie free agent on May 2, 2003. Last season he played in 12 games, including two starts at left tackle: Sept. 15 vs. Dallas and Nov. 30 vs. Buffalo.*

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